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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 3352
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1462
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2469
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 5181
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2790
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 3299
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 3139
RUEHBD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1311
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 002187

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MLS, EAP/MTS, EAP/RSP
NSC FOR E.PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/01/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEAN](#) [ID](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: ASEAN SUMMIT -- INDONESIAN AND SECRETARIAT VIEWS

REF: A. STATE 123211

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 2170

[1](#)C. BANGKOK 3491

Classified By: A/Pol/C Stanley Harsha, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Indonesian Government and ASEAN Secretariat officials say it is increasingly likely that the upcoming ASEAN Summit and related meetings will be postponed due to the political standoff in Thailand. If the situation in Thailand is not resolved, one possibility under discussion is to hold the summits at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta in late January.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY (Con'd): Despite the possible postponement, officials are preparing for Summit discussions on democracy and human rights, Burma, and various economic agreements. Secretariat officials expect their operations to expand to cope with the new demands of building a ASEAN Community. END SUMMARY

SUMMITS MAY BE POSTPONED

[1](#)3. (SBU) Per Ref A request, Mission officers engaged Indonesian Government and ASEAN Secretariat officials regarding the upcoming ASEAN Summit and related meetings. ASEAN Secretariat officials told us they expected the Government of Thailand to postpone the ASEAN Summit due to the ongoing political stalemate in Bangkok. ASEAN would formally inform dialogue partners of the final decision in the coming days, perhaps as early as December 2, Secretariat officials said.

[1](#)4. (C) GOI officials agreed the summits were likely to be postponed. George Lantu, Deputy Director for ASEAN Political and Security Cooperation at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU), said GOI officials had been unable to travel to Thailand for pre-summit meetings because of the closure of key Thai airports. They noted that ASEAN Secretariat officials also had been unable to travel to Thailand. Lantu said Indonesia expected the meetings to occur in January or March, 2009. (Note: Under the Charter, ASEAN should hold two summits per year. It is unclear whether a rescheduled summit would take the place of one of those slated for 2009 or whether there would be three summits that year.)

15. (C) Lantu said that, if the situation in Thailand remained unresolved, one option under discussion was to hold the summits at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. However, he cautioned, this could not occur before late January, given the preparatory work needed. Until the summit's postponement is formally announced, GOI officials will continue to prepare for the meetings as currently scheduled.

ENTHUSIASM FOR U.S. PRESENCE

16. (SBU) Indonesian officials praised the decision to name EAP DAS Scot Marciel Ambassador for ASEAN Affairs. They also welcomed Ambassador Marciel's attendance at the upcoming meetings and said this would do much to help dispel the view that the U.S. was not engaged with ASEAN.

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT CENTER STAGE

17. (C) Indonesian officials believe the inclusion of the ASEAN Human Rights Body (AHRB) in the Charter is a significant achievement. They said Indonesia had pushed hard for this but that the body had fallen short of what it wanted, particularly regarding monitoring and enforcement mechanism. This, Lantu explained, was because of the need to accommodate other member states' sensitivities. Indonesia would continue to press for these issues through a high-level panel which continues to discuss the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the human rights body, he said.

18. (C) Secretariat officials agreed that approval of the TOR would take some time. Dr. Termsak Chalermphanupap, Senior

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Advisor to the Secretary General, noted that a high level panel was in the process of finalizing the terms of reference (TOR) for the AHRB, which would be reviewed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the margins of the ASEAN Summit. The final draft of the TOR would be submitted to the Foreign Ministers for consideration in 2009. DEPLU officials said they expected approval of the TOR at the July ASEAN Ministerial Meeting.

19. (C) Given the large disparity in views on human rights, the AHRB will focus primarily on the general promotion of human rights during its initial phase, according to Dr. Termsak. The limited scope of the AHRB has prompted Secretary General Surin to propose creating an ASEAN Human Rights Centre, to work in parallel with the official AHRB, providing ideas on more controversial human rights issues and policy advice. The center is expected to be formed in Jakarta, most likely in conjunction with the University of Indonesia, given Indonesia's leadership on human rights issues within ASEAN, according to Mr. Termsak. The ASEAN Secretariat has approached the ASEAN-U.S. Technical Assistance and Training Facility to assist with the development of the ASEAN Human Rights Centre.

BURMA ALSO ON THE AGENDA

10. (C) DEPLU interlocutors expect Burma to feature in the upcoming ASEAN summit agenda. Regarding a possible statement, Lantu said Indonesia would push for "not less than was in last year's statement" on the matter. He cautioned, however, that, given the sensitivity of this issue for some ASEAN member states, Indonesia did not expect the organization to take a tougher line on Burma. As a result, the GOI preferred to focus on using the upcoming Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) to raise democracy issues with Burma (see Ref B). Lantu opined that Burma's decision to attend the BDF was a step forward. Their participation would give Indonesia an opportunity to share the experiences of its own democratization process with the Burmese.

11. (C) Parliamentarians plan to push for a tougher approach on this issue. Djoko Susilo, a member of the House of Representatives (DRP) Burma Caucus, told us that legislators

would press the GOI if the AHRB TOR was too weak. They hoped the document would grant the body the power to sanction Burma or other member states that flouted the Charter's provisions on human rights and democracy. Susilo said he planned to take the case for a stronger AHRB to the Indonesian media in order to influence senior GOI officials.

ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

¶12. (C) GOI interlocutors said they would support efforts to finalize the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI)--a currency swap arrangement created during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. Benjamin Carnadi, DEPLU's Deputy Director for ASEAN Economic Cooperation, said the CMI would help regional economies deal with the current global financial crisis.

¶13. (C) DEPLU officials reiterated Indonesia's support for the creation of a single ASEAN market and the various free trade deals to be signed at the summit. They said that Health Minister Supari's recent negative comments about the single market did not represent GOI policy. (Note: Supari has criticized the ASEAN single market because it would allow competition in the health sector.) Our interlocutors underscored Indonesian support for the various economic agreements listed in Ref C.

POST-SUMMIT COMMUNITY BUILDING A PRIORITY

¶14. (C) For Indonesia, the major achievement of the ASEAN summit will be the likely adoption of the ASEAN Political/Security Blueprint and the ASEAN Social/Cultural Blueprint. These documents, still under discussion among member states, will translate the Charter's goals into a specific policy mechanism. Citing the ongoing nature of the

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negotiations, neither Lantu nor Carnadi provided much detail about the blueprints. They agreed that Indonesia was so far satisfied with the negation process and the likely outcome documents.

¶15. (SBU) Secretariat official Termsak told us the upcoming ASEAN Summit and the ASEAN Charter entering into force would mark a shift in ASEAN's focus, moving from policy coordination toward community building. ASEAN's activities would increasingly center on capacity-building among member countries, to ensure rapid economic and social integration. However, Dr. Termsak and other ASEAN Secretariat Officials have warned observers not to expect a sudden, wholesale change in the way ASEAN operates. In an effort to more effectively manage the economic integration process, ASEAN plans to form a Committee of the Whole (COW), which will consist of the senior officials from all of ASEAN's economic sectoral bodies, including trade, finance, transportation, telecommunications and energy. The COW will provide ASEAN with a mechanism to coordinate and prioritize the blueprint implementation process across sectors and member countries.

¶16. (SBU) The shift to community building is expected to increase the mandate of the ASEAN Secretariat markedly. The Secretariat is in the process of a large-scale reorganization, which includes the addition of two new Deputy Secretaries General and the hiring of 70 additional staff members. The Secretariat has also proposed to member countries a near doubling of its annual operating budget, from \$9 million to \$17 million. The ASEAN Charter retains an equal dues structure, so each member country would be required to contribute \$1.7 million per year if the budget is approved. The reorganization of the Secretariat includes the creation of a legal services division to assist with the interpretation and enforcement of ASEAN agreements in the future. The Secretariat has also proposed creating a macroeconomic and financial sector surveillance unit to assist member countries in financial system monitoring and to help guide regional economic policy decisions.

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